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No

TITLE

PAGE

REV. JOHN HIGGINSON, OF SALEM, MASS.

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AT a meeting of the MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, held in Boston, on Thursday, May 14, 1896, Dr. SAMUEL A. GREEN said:—

Since the last meeting of the Society, our associate Colonel Thomas W. Higginson has given to the Library a rare volume entitled "Our Dying Saviour's Legacy of Peace to His Disciples in a troublesome World" (Boston, 1686), which was written by his ancestor the Rev. John Higginson, of Salem. It is of special interest at the present time, as it adds another title to the List of Early American Imprints belonging to the Society, which appears in the Proceedings (second series, IX. 410-540). This little book has more historical value than usually attaches to such productions, as the preface contains some biographical matter which far outweighs in importance the doctrinal views so common in early theological works. Mr. Higginson, the author, came over from England in 1629 with his father, who died during the next year. Though a mere lad at the time, the care and maintenance of his mother and seven other children fell largely upon him, the eldest of the family; and he soon developed those traits of character for which he afterward became distinguished. For some years he lived in the Colony of Connecticut, but in the summer of 1660 was ordained over the same church at Salem which his father had planted; and here he remained for nearly half a century. He published several occasional discourses; and among them is the Election Sermon of 1663, the first one printed in that long series of annual addresses. While he was a relentless opponent of the Quakers, he took no part in the terrible tragedy of 1692 at Salem, where he was then settled.

The following is a fac-simile reproduction of the titlepage of the volume, with a collation of the same:—



*Our Dying Saviour's*  
**LEGACY of PEACE**

To His Disciples in a troublesome  
 World, from *John 14.27.*

*My Peace I give unto you, &c.*

Also a  
**DISCOURSE**

On the Two WITNESSES:

Shewing that it is the Duty of all Christians  
 to be Witnesses unto Christ, from *Rev. 11.3.*

*I will give to my two Witnesses, &c.*

Unto which is added,  
 Some Help to Self-Examination.

By *John Higginson* Pastor of the Church in  
*Salem.*

*2 Pet. 1.14, 15* Knowing that I must shortly put off  
 this Tabernacle, I will endeavour, that after my  
 decease you may have these things alwayes in  
 remembrance.

*Boston*, Printed by *Samuel Green* for *John*  
*Usher* near the Town-House, 1686.

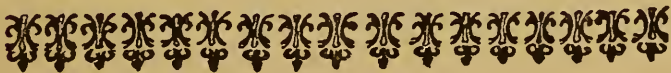


91.12654  
 Titlepage, surrounded by a border line, *verso* blank ; 7 pp. "To the Church and People of God at Salem ; also at Guilford and Say Brook : Grace unto you, and Peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ," headpiece a line of seventeen border pieces, a rule, and a line of similar pieces inverted, headlines "To the Reader," signed "John Higginson," and dated at Salem, August 6, 1686 ; 1 p. blank ; 3 pp. "Christian Reader," headpiece similar to the first one, headlines "To the Reader," signed "of him who is a Well-wisher to Israels Peace, Samuel Willard" ; 1 p. blank ; 1-131, "John 14. 27," text, headpiece similar to the first, various headlines ; 1 p. blank ; 133-185, "Revelations II. III.," text, headpiece similar to the first, various headlines ; 1 p. blank ; 183 [187]-205, "Some help to Self-Examination, which I drew up for my Self, in the Year 1652. But may be of like use to any, that shall peruse the same ; with Meditation and Self Application, and earnest Prayer, as Psal. 139. 23, 24," headpiece a line of seventeen border pieces, headlines "Self-Examination" ; 1 p. blank ; 1 p. "Advertisement," between two lines of border pieces, as given below : —



### *Advertisement.*

**T**Here is now ready for the Press,  
 and will shortly be Printed a  
 small Treatise about *Justification*, by the  
 Reverend Mr. *Samuel Willard*, Teacher  
 at the South Church in *Boston*.



By a coincidence, which happened quite independently of Colonel Higginson's gift, and at nearly the same time, was the binding of a thin tract by the Rev. John Higginson, printed in the year 1665. It is entitled "A Direction for a Publick Profession in the Church Assembly, after private Examination by the Elders," etc., and more than eighty years ago came into the possession of the Library, where it was given by Lieutenant-Governor Thomas L. Winthrop, afterward the President of

the Society. A short time later it was bound up with twenty other pamphlets, of which none approached it in value or interest. Through the kindness of our associate, Mr. Robert C. Winthrop, Jr., at his expense this tract has been taken from the volume, carefully cleaned, and bound separately in full morocco. For a collation of its pages, see Proceedings (second series, IX. 423) of the Society.

The Rev. Joseph B. Felt reprints the tract, both in his pamphlet entitled "Did the First Church of Salem originally have a Confession of Faith distinct from their Covenant?" (Boston 1856), pages 23-25; and also in his "Reply to the New-England Congregationalism of Hon. Daniel A. White" (Salem 1856), pages 55-57. A clew to the date of its appearance (1665) is found on page 17 of the first-named pamphlet, as well as a clew to its authorship.

In the lower margin of the first page of the tract, in the handwriting of Governor John Winthrop, Jr., is the following: "The author is Mr John Higenson Pastor of y<sup>e</sup> Church of Salem." Specimens of the same writing may be seen in a copy of an Almanack for 1662, which is bound up with four other English almanacs, that had once belonged to three generations of the Winthrop family, and now are found on the shelves of the Historical Society. John Winthrop, Jr., and John Higginson were contemporaries, and at one time lived near each other in Connecticut; and of course they knew one another well. I mention this fact in some detail, as I consider the written statement in regard to the authorship to be conclusive, inasmuch as it was made at that period; and furthermore Dr. Felt reached the same conclusion, presumably from an independent starting-point.

It has been said that the Rev. Francis Higginson, the father, was the writer of the tract,—and not the son,—inasmuch as the title refers to "the Church of *Salem*" in 1629, the year it was gathered. A careful reading of the phraseology, however, shows that the "Direction for a Publick Profession," etc., purported to be only "the same for Substance," and did not claim to be identical with that originally agreed upon by the Church.

Higginson's tract was printed in the year 1665 by Samuel Green, of Cambridge, who at that period was the only printer in the Colonies.















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